

*Author.*  
Japheth dwelling in the Tents of Shem)

OR

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*Parkman*  
Infant Baptism Vindicated,

IN

A Discourse,

The Substance of which was delivered in Upton,

January 5, 1772.

With Objections answered.

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By ELISHA FISH, A. M.

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Published at the Desire of some of the Hearers, and others.

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With an APPENDIX,  
Taken from the Rev. Mr. David Bestwick's  
Fair and Rational Vindication.

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*Known unto God are all his Works, from the beginning of the  
World.*

*Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, and will  
not tarry.*

*The like Figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth also now save us*

JAMES.  
HABAKKUK.  
PETER.

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A  
 VINDICATION  
 OF  
 Infant Baptism.

GENESIS, IX. 27.

*God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell  
 in the Tents of Shem.*

**T**HESE Words are a prediction of the Patriarch Noah, a preacher of righteousness, who saw the old and was the father of the new world ; whom God saved from the deluge, with his family, by the ark, which he prepared through faith, at God's warning. And after Noah with his family were come forth of the ark, God entered into covenant with him and his seed after him ; and with every living creature, v. 9, 10, of the context ; and gave him a token of this covenant, the bow in the cloud, that is often exhibited before our eyes, as a standing demonstration of the continuance of that covenant with Noah, his seed and all creatures in relation to him, as the father of the new world. When these things were accomplished, Noah entered upon a new scene of husbandry, planted a vineyard, and drank of the wine, and was drunken ; whether this was through ignorance of its intoxicating nature, or to let us see the infirmities of the best of men, we are not informed ; most likely it was his ignorance, as the words—" began to be an husbandman" may lead us

to think. In this state of intoxication, Ham discovers his father's nakedness, which he tells to his brethren, as one that had no religious veneration for his father, whose infirmity he ought to have concealed or covered, in which his impiety appeared. On this occasion his brethren, Shem and Japheth, shew a very different temper, religiously covering their father's nakedness; an example worthy of imitation by all pious children, the reward of which soon rises in sight, as follows, when Noah awaking from his wine, and knowing what his younger son Ham had done to him, he pronounces a curse on his seed, that has long since taken place; and then proceeds to say "blessed be the Lord God of Shem," in which he plainly speaks out the covenant relation of God with the line of Shem, in the family of Abraham, in whose family God's church should be continued, as their God, with Shem's superiority over Canaan. He then utters the prediction in our text, *God shall enlarge*, or, as in the margin, *perswade Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem*. Here it appears, that holy Noah, knowing that God had established his covenant with him and his seed as above, spake as holy men were wont to do, being moved by the holy Ghost; and foreseeing the continuance of the church in the line of Shem, and in the family of Abraham, with the covenant relation which should be afterwards sealed to Abraham and his seed, by the token of circumcision, as the seal of the righteousness of that faith which constituted Abraham the father of all them that believe, and heir of the world, Rom. iv. 11, 13. Who should in this manner take possession of the covenant, as heir in behalf of all believers through the world, both of Jews and Gentiles. With this prophetic view Noah says, "blessed be the Lord God of Shem" Then, by the same prophetic spirit, foreseeing that in gospel times, Japheth's posterity should be taken into the same covenant relation to God with that of the posterity of Shem, and sealed with the seal of the same righteousness of faith in baptism, he declares as in our text, "God shall enlarge" or perswade "Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem," that is, his posterity shall

shall be brought to partake of the same covenant relation to God, as his God, and the God of his seed, and sealed with the gospel seal of the same righteousness of faith, with Abraham and his seed, by incorporation or grafting into the same body, or stock, with the church in Shem's line of Abraham's seed. In this view, the words of our text are justly to be considered, as a sure declaration, that in some future period, the posterity of Japheth should be brought into the same covenant relation to God, as their God, and the God of their seed, which actually took place in the family of Abraham of the line of Shem. In this manner having opened the way for a fair view of the things contained in our text, we shall proceed,

I. To shew what is to be understood by the tents of Shem, in which the posterity of Japheth shall dwell.

II. Point out when God did, in a special manner, begin the accomplishment of this prediction in our text, of Japheth's dwelling in the tents of Shem.

III. Speak some things concerning Japheth's coming into, and dwelling in these tents.

IV. Notice how God has actually accomplished the prediction in the text; and how it concerns every one to find himself dwelling in these tents.

V. Answer some objections that may rise in the minds of some, against what is said; and then close with some reflections, by way of Improvement.

I. I am to shew what is to be understood by the tents of Shem, in which the posterity of Japheth shall dwell.

*First.* Negatively, what can't be understood by them.

1. Here it cannot be understood, that these tents of Shem were the very land of Canaan, or some habitations in which Abraham's seed dwelt, nor any of those outward blessings that were comprized in their dwelling in the earthly Canaan, which was typical of the heavenly; nor the

the civil government of that nation, nor yet the Mosaic administration, priesthood and ceremonies, that are vanished away, as Heb. viii. 13. These forementioned privileges of Abraham's posterity, I suppose, will not be understood by any sober enquirer, as Shem's tents, in which Japheth shall dwell under the gospel.

2. These tents can't be understood of a covenant or privileges entirely new, or in opposition to Abraham's covenant and privileges, that took place in the gospel day, as some may have been almost ready to imagine: For this is most evident, on such a supposition of an entirely new covenant in the gospel day, it could not be consistent with common language, sense, or truth, to call these privileges of such a new covenant, Shem's tents, that he never yet once owned, or dwelt in; no, nor at this day, do his posterity as a people, own; but utterly refuse by unbelief, are broken off from their own stock, into which the Gentiles are grafted, as Paul hath it. Now, how can this consist with there being new tents erected, where they never dwelt? nor, as a people, yet once acknowledged for their dwellings or tents? This way of reasoning among Christians is to increase the stumbling blocks in the way of Shem's blinded posterity, and agrees not to that of the prophet, "rake up the stumbling block out of the way of my people," Isai. lvii. 14. Thus much negatively, what is not to be understood by Shem's tents, in which Japheth shall dwell.

*Secondly*, Positively, I am to shew what is to be understood by these tents of Shem. And by these tents, as in a metaphor, the religious covenant privileges of God's people are to be understood, which were first opened to and enjoyed by the seed of Shem, in the line of Abraham, and in allusion to the custom of that age and time, and particular practice of those ancient Patriarchs of the seed of Shem, who were wont to dwell in tents, or tabernacles, as speaketh the Apostle of Abraham, "By faith he sojourned  
" in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling  
" in tabernacles, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him  
" of

“ of the same promise.” Heb. xi. 9. It is with reference to the special religious and covenant privileges enjoyed in these tents, that they are called tents of Shem, in distinction from those of the gentile nations, that are called tents of wickedness, where no such covenant and privileges were enjoyed. This will rise in clear view, if we observe how God did open and confirm his covenant with Abraham and his seed, who were of the line of Shem; saying, “ in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Gen. xii. 3. And Abraham is encouraged with this, “ Fear not, I am thy exceeding great reward.” chap. xv. 1. And ver. 18. the land of Canaan is promised, and in the xviith chapter of Genesis we have God confirming this covenant with Abraham, and annexing the seal or token of circumcision to it. In this covenant we find not only large earthly blessings and privileges, but these words of God, “ As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and “ thou shalt be a father of many nations,” ver. 4. And again, “ For a father of many nations have I made thee,” ver. 5. And see the Apostle Paul applying this very text to the believing Romans, in gospel times, Rom. iv. 16, 17. Further, God says to Abraham, “ And I will establish my “ covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, “ in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be “ a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee,” ver. 7. Again, “ and I will be their God,” ver. 8. Now, if we compare these promises with the new covenant promises under the Gospel, “ I will put my laws into their mind “ and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them “ a God, and they shall be to me a people.” Heb. viii. 10. Here we see the same covenant privileges, or tents of grace for Shem in Abraham’s day, that were spread out in Paul’s time ; although there be some difference in the words, yet there is not in the sense, with regard to the gracious nature or tenor of them ; for the expression is as full, with relation to God’s being the God of Abraham, and his seed, as it is when he saith, I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people ; see, almost the very same expression concerning him that overcometh, and shall inherit

inherit all things, "and I will be his God." Rev. xxi. 7. Is there any variation in the proper extent of that promise, "and I will be their God," Gen. xvii. 8. "And I will be his God," Rev. xxi. 7? Only one is in the singular number, and the other in the plural. If it be here said, the new covenant engaged, on God's part, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. This is fully implied in, I will be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee, and expressed in the course of the fulfilling the covenant with Abraham, as Moses saith, "the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." Deut. xxx. 6. Here let three things be noticed concerning this covenant, which God made with Abraham and his seed.

First, That what God did to Israel, when he brought them out of Egypt into Canaan, and set up his tabernacle or tent among them, and renewed his covenant with them, as we see it expressed, "I will set my tabernacle amongst you, and my soul shall not abhor you, and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people," Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. this was done to fulfil God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as we see it expressed, "And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know, that I am the Lord your God. I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob," Exod. vi. 7, 8. Thus we see all this is done on the bottom of Abraham's covenant, and this is further expressed, Deut. xiv. 2.

A Second thing, that we would notice, is this, that Christ, and gospel deliverance from enemies, is referred to this covenant with Abraham, as expressed by Mary and Zacharias. See Mary thus speaking, "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and his seed forever." Luke i. 54, 55. And this is further expressed by Zacharias, "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which  
" he

"he sware to our father Abraham" Luke i. 72, 73. These things most clearly point to Christ, and gospel grace, as contained in that covenant with Abraham of the seed of Shem.

The Third Thing, that we would notice, is, what the Apostle Paul claims for believers under the Gospel, even of the heathen nations; see what he saith, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." And the Scripture foreseeing that "God would justify the Heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed," he then draws the consequence, "so then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9. Here Paul shews that believers are Abraham's children, and as such have his blessing, by a foresight of the Scriptures. Again Paul saith, "if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. iii. 29. Again, saith the same Apostle, "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond woman, but of the free." Gal. iv. 31. In the above view, of what is contained in Abraham's covenant, it appears, that we go on a sure bottom, in our search of the Scriptures for Shem's tents, in the covenant privileges of Abraham, and his seed, of the line of Shem. For in this view we find these tents of Shem to be indeed the tents of grace, in the covenant of Abraham: If there is any such thing as a covenant of grace in the Bible, or tents of grace in the gospel, they are to be found *in the promises, privileges, and blessings of the covenant made with Abraham, and his seed.* To which the inspired writers of the New Testament so often appeal, that the gospel, in its fullest publication, is but a confirmation, or accomplishment of the promises made to the fathers, Rom. xv. 8. Thus having clearly discovered, in the covenant with Abraham, of the seed of Shem, what we are to understand by the tents of Shem; which truly appear to be the tents of grace, in which our text assures us Japheth shall dwell: We now proceed to enquire, who were found dwelling in these

these tents of Shem, before Japheth came to dwell in them. And here we find, that in these tents of Shem in Abraham's line, children even of eight days old, were admitted to dwell, as we see it expressed, " This is my covenant, " which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed " after thee; every man child among you shall be circum- " cised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore- " skin, and it shall be a token of the covenant, betwixt " me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be " circumcised among you." Gen. xvii. 10, 11, 12. " And " the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin " is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his " people: he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii. 14. See also Deut. xxix. 10, and on, this matter fully comprized in that covenant which God made with Israel, that took in every age and rank of persons, expressly, to be a people unto himself; and that he might be their God. And all this to fulfil his oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as we see in v, 13. Hence we may lift up our eyes and see in these tents of Shem, parents with their children bearing the token of the covenant, at God's command, and not allowed to be reckoned with God's people, but cut off from them as covenant breakers, if not receiving the token of the covenant in their flesh. Thus we are certain, beyond dispute, that before Japheth came to dwell in these tents of Shem, parents and their infant seed dwelt here. But,

II. We were to point out, when God did, in a special manner, begin the accomplishment of this prediction in our text, of Japheth's dwelling in the tents of Shem.

This, most evidently, began in the Apostolic age, when God did, by the preaching of the Apostles, gather many churches from among the Gentiles; as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. An instance of this we have in the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman officer, and his friends, who seem evidently to come from Europe, where Japheth's posterity dwell. Acts xv. 14. James saith, " Simeon hath declared how God at first did visit the " Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."

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This is a reference to what Peter had said, ver. 7. and leads back to his preaching to Cornelius, Acts x. 45, and on. God having thus begun to open Shem's tents, for Japheth to dwell in, did, in a most surprizing manner, cause the gospel to run and be glorified of the Gentiles, as we see, when the Apostles, Paul and Barnabas, being rejected of the Jews, turned to the Gentiles. "They were glad and glorified the word of the Lord: And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." Acts xiii. 48. In this manner, we may easily find by the Scriptures, when the prediction in our text did, in a special or peculiar sense, begin to be accomplished. And the speedy spread of the gospel, in the Apostle's days, even into Europe, and those parts where Japheth's seed must evidently inhabit, confirms this beyond doubt, with all serious and understanding inquirers.

### III. We are to speak some things concerning Japheth's coming into and dwelling in these tents.

1. The certainty of it appears as it is an absolute prediction, "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem;" in this certainty, it resembles that divine saying of our Lord, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." John vi. 37. There is no room left us to doubt of the accomplishment; although it did tarry long, even more than two thousand years, before it began, in any considerable degree to bring forth, yet has the decree proved certain in the event; for "known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." Acts xv. 18; as saith the Apostle, in reference to the call of the Gentiles. "And hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" Numb. xxiii. 19. In this light, as a most certain prediction, our text ought to be viewed, by all that own the Christian name.

2. We shall inquire into the manner of Japheth's coming into these tents of Shem.

1. This coming to dwell in the tents of Shem is mentioned by the Apostle, under the view of an incorporation into the Jewish Church, in this language, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles, in the

" flesh, who are called uncircumcision, by that which is  
 " called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that  
 " at that time, ye were without Christ, being aliens from  
 " the common wealth of Israel, and strangers from the  
 " covenants of promise, having no hope, and without  
 " God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who  
 " sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of  
 " Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one,  
 " and hath broken down the middle wall of partition be-  
 " tween us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even  
 " the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for  
 " to make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making  
 " peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God, in  
 " one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.  
 " And came and preached peace to you, which were afar  
 " off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we  
 " both have an access by one Spirit, unto the Father. Now  
 " therefore ye are no more strangers, and foreigners, but  
 " fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of  
 " God." Eph. ii. 11 to 19. See further how this is expressed,  
 " That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the  
 " same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by  
 " the gospel." Eph. iii. 6. Here we find the Gentile  
 " Ephesians, by believing and receiving the gospel, brought  
 " into such an incorporation, or union with that covenant  
 " body of Shem's posterity, which were called the circum-  
 " cision, that they are of twain made one new man; are  
 " of the same body, citizens of the same city, members of  
 " the same house, fellow heirs and partakers of his promise  
 " in Christ by the gospel. And we are taught to reason,  
 " as the Apostle doth, " If ye be Christ's, then are ye  
 " Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."  
 " Gal. iii. 29. In this manner we find believers of the  
 " Gentile stock, by incorporation with Shem's posterity,  
 " brought into these tents of Shem, and dwelling in them,  
 " in gospel times.

2. The coming into these tents, is described, by the  
 " Apostle, under the form of grafting into the same stock,

and among the branches of that covenant body, of Shem's race; see what Paul saith, "If the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches." And if some of the branches be broken off, "and thou being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree." Rom. xi. 16, 17. Here we clearly see the grafted Gentiles, of Japheth's posterity among the Romans, partake of the same root, and fatness of the olive tree, as Shem's posterity, and thus we see Japheth come into, and dwelling in the tents of Shem. In this view of the manner how Japheth comes in to dwell in these tents of Shem, by incorporation, or grafting, it is proper to observe, that it does not look like pulling down Shem's tents, and building new tents, and excluding the former heirs, altho' there be some alteration in the external administration of seals; for 'tis the same church now, as in Shem's and Abraham's days, and will be to the end of the world, built on the same covenant promises, as the manner of the Gentiles coming into these tents of Shem plainly supposes, and our text fully points out, as a prediction of what should be after accomplished in the church of God. Hence it evidently follows, that if children, were by divine command, admitted, into these tents of Shem, as most certainly they were, then they must be there still, unless God has shut them out by some express order, which I believe none dare pretend.

Now, for us of Japheth's posterity, to leave out our children from these tents of Shem, after God has brought them in, without his special direction, in so great a matter, and so contrary to the nature of the covenant, into which the Gentiles are brought, under the gospel, and so directly in the face of the prediction, in our text, that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem: This looks like too much, for any mere man, without inspiration, to undertake.

3. Can it be true, or possible, that Japheth shall ~~not~~ certainly dwell in the tents of Shem, according to the prediction in the text? and at the same time, when this prediction

prediction in the text begins to take place, then Shem's tents shall begin to vanish away. so that he shall have no tents to dwell in? Which is indeed the strange case, if all the covenant privileges of Abraham are vacated, or lost; and another, and new covenant, takes place, with this material alteration, that one great part of the privileged heirs are left out, as some would suppose. In this view of the matter, we shall find this absurdity, that when Japheth is come to dwell in the tents of Shem, he truly has none, either for himself or Japheth, and all this is grounded on a mistaken construction of the Scriptures, about the new covenant, principally founded on Heb. viii. 6. to 10. and 13. quoted from Jer. xxxi. chap. Wrongly applying this covenant, that is to be vacated, to the covenant and privileges granted to Abraham and his seed, when it plainly points out another covenant, made with Israel, in coming from Egypt, which was the legal administration of the Mosaic dispensation, in the form of a covenant; for thus the Apostle saith on this occasion: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt," Heb. viii. 9. Thus it appears, that Abraham's covenant could not be intended, for that was made long before this time. And see this further manifest by comparing ver. 13, which runs thus, "In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth, and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." Now let this be viewed in connection with what the Apostle saith of the covenant, made with Abraham, and it will appear impossible, he should mean, or intend, that covenant was ready to vanish away, or a new one take its place. See his words, "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Gal. iii. 17. And this is further cleared from the Prophet's words, "In that day will I raise up, the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old."

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Amos ix. 11. These, with the following words, are mentioned by the Apostle James, as accomplished in the gospel day, in bringing in the Gentiles to the Christian Church, Acts xv. 16, 17. Hence the conclusion is evident, that the covenant made with Abraham, and after confirmed to David, is not taken away, but raised and closed up, and the Gentiles gathered into it as Shem's tents.

But still to put this matter further out of dispute, that Abraham's covenant is not vacated, or referred to as the old covenant, Heb. viii. 6. and on, let the Apostle speak, and he saith, "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." Heb. ix. 1. These, with the following words, fully declare that it was the Mosaic covenant which the Apostle referred to, that verily had the worldly sanctuary, and not that of Abraham which had the token of circumcision annexed to it. Thus we are led to a certainty, what was called the first and old covenant, and was ready to vanish away, even that which had a worldly sanctuary, which was the Mosaic, or Old-Testament administration, in the form of a covenant, with all the ceremonies and priesthood belonging thereto; and is pointed at in these several places, Heb. vii. 12, 18, 19, and viii. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 7 to 11. Thus having found, that it was Moses's covenant, which has waxed old and vanished away, as a shadow, agreeable to its nature, as speaketh the Apostle, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered." Heb. x. 1, 2. See again ver. 9. "Then said he, lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." These words tell us, what is taken away, 'tis the law of sacrifices, and ceremonies, as shadows that did not perfect the comers thereto, only as shadows of good things to come, which were Christ, and the gospel dispensation; and the ground of removing that administration, or dispensation, which was  
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its insufficiency, without Christ, the substance, who was the very person that saith, "do, I come to do thy will, O God." Here, 'tis Christ that taketh away the first covenant, or administration, of the Mosaic law; that he may establish the second, that is the gospel administration, as the end designed and pointed at by the law, as the shadow resembles the substance. Hence we may be sure that Abraham's covenant has not been vacated, or removed, by the coming of Christ, or the gospel, but confirmed. It being most certain, that Christ, with all gospel blessings, were contained in Abraham's covenant, agreeable to many passages of Scripture already mentioned. And what Christ saith, further determines it. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." John viii. 56. Again, we find the Apostle Paul (who is judged to be the author of the epistle to the Hebrews) collecting the rights and privileges of Gentile Christians from the promises made to Abraham, and proceeding in his argument, I speaketh in this manner. "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed." Gal. iii. 8. Now, it cannot be thought, that the actual accomplishment of these very promises, made to Abraham, in the coming of Christ, preaching of the gospel, justifying the Heathen through faith (in which Abraham rejoiced) were indeed the vanishing away of that covenant, where these promises are found. This is in itself so great a contradiction, and makes Paul to destroy *that*, in the epistle to the Hebrews, with which he had built in his epistle to the Galatians, that none, but either a prejudiced or infidel mind, will be disposed to admit it.

Farther, we are assured from the Scriptures, that circumcision was not of Moses, whose covenant administration is vanished away under the gospel; but of the fathers. Therefore we conclude, that Shem's tents, in these covenant privileges, secured to Abraham and his seed, and sealed by circumcision, are yet standing, in their full strength, and wide open for Japheth, and all the Gentiles  
(on

(on whom God's name is called) to enter in and dwell there, with this certainty, "that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." And these "are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. iii. 7, 9. Yea, the Apostle speaking to the gentile believers saith, "We are the circumcision." Philip. iii. 3. Now, can we be the children of Abraham? Can we be blessed with faithful Abraham? Can we be heirs according to the promise? Gal. iii. 29. Can we be the circumcision? Yea, can we be assured, by our text, that gentile believers, even Japheth, shall dwell in the tents of Shem, where Abraham and his seed were admitted, and enjoyed "a seal of the righteousness of faith?" Rom. iv. 11. Again, can we now, on these clear grounds, claim admittance into these tents of Shem, as gentile believers, and receive a seal of the righteousness of the same faith, in baptism, and build our hopes of being the true seed of Abraham, on these very promises that were sealed to Abraham and his seed? and yet refuse to imitate our father Abraham, in applying a seal of the righteousness of the same faith to our infant seed, which Abraham applied to his seed, and thus exclude our infant seed from these tents of Shem, without one express word of God for this extraordinary piece of conduct; pleading for this conduct, either the change of the seal, or want of express command, in the New-Testament; when considering how the seed of Abraham were admitted into these tents, and enjoyed a seal of the righteousness of faith in them; and we Gentiles assured of admission into them, without a word to forbid our children to enter with us. In this view, if we reason like men, or Christians, we should judge as in all similar cases, that the want of an express command to shut them out of these tents, necessarily and unavoidably supposed, that they were to dwell in them, as in the days of old, agreeable to that of the prophet, "Their children also shall be as aforetime." Jer. xxx. 20. This seems to be an allusion to the gospel-time, as may be found by the 9th verse of the context. But still pursuing this subject of inquiry, we find Abraham and his seed, received in cir-

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circumcision a seal of the righteousness of that faith which constituted him "the father of all them that believe," and "heir of the world." Rom. iv. 11, 13. How then shall a believer of the posterity of Japheth (who is to dwell in the tents of Shem, by divine prediction) take a view of Abraham, as the father of all them that believe, and heir of the world, thro' the righteousness of that faith, which was sealed to him and his seed, by circumcision, as a title or claim to these tents; and yet refuse the seal of the same righteousness of faith, to his seed, when he comes into these tents under the Gospel, and receives the seal of the same righteousness of faith, in baptism, for himself, as a child of Abraham, who is his father, and pattern of believing; although he knows that Abraham, in this very transaction, at God's command, received and applied to himself and seed, that seal of the righteousness of faith, which constituted him father and pattern of all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, to the end of the world; and that there is not one word in the Bible forbidding him to imitate Abraham in this; but on the contrary, Abraham's being considered in this matter as the father and pattern of all that believe, binds us to follow the steps of Abraham, in his faith, and sealing of it, to ourselves and seed, with the seal of the same. In this view I should wonder how a true believer, who accounted Abraham his father, should claim the seal for himself, and not for his seed. But alas! who can understand his errors?

4. Is it to be imagined, that not only the children of Japheth are left out of these tents of Shem; where Japheth is to dwell in gospel times? but also Shem's own children are shut out of them, when Japheth comes into them? Which is really the case, if baptism is not administered to the infant seed of believing Jews or Gentiles, in the gospel day: For if the infants of believers are not allowed baptism, they have no visible interest in these tents; as we know they had none of old, who were not circumcised; but were cut off from God's people, as covenant breakers. Now who can think this is done, in depriving

depriving Shem of his ancient privilege, and cutting off the seed of Japheth from all visible title to these tents; and not a word expressly said about this great change in the church of God, between the Old and New-Testament administration? And again, how shall the prediction, in our text, have a proper accomplishment, that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem? where, we certainly know, that the infant seed of Shem, in Abraham's line, did enjoy a seal of the righteousness of faith, as a pledge, or title to these tents.

Now, is the prediction fairly accomplished, if we exclude the infant seed of Japheth from baptism, the gospel seal of the righteousness of faith, and so of course exclude them from the visible badge, or title to these tents? Here I should think it highly concerned all believers fairly to solve these difficulties, about the accomplishment of the prediction in our text, before they exclude their children from baptism, which is the gospel badge or title to these tents; lest in this they openly oppose the accomplishment of the prediction made to Japheth.

5. If any, in order to vindicate their practice of excluding children from the seal of baptism, which is a badge or title to these tents, should plead, that Abraham's covenant was not a covenant of grace; then it would certainly follow, that Shem's tents were not tents of grace; where Abraham, and his seed, dwelt; and where Japheth shall dwell in the gospel day. Although this is a most strange absurdity, and not to be avoided on the above plea; and enough hath been already said on that account, in the preceding pages. Yet these things may be farther added.

1. That Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise, are either gone to hell and damnation; or got into heaven without a covenant of grace; if that was not a covenant of grace referred to, Heb. xi. 9.

2. If this covenant with Abraham was not a covenant of grace, but some kind of external covenant, about temporal good things only; then it follows, that Paul reasons

falsely, when he saith, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh," Rom. ii. 28. For if the covenant had related only to external things, then an external conformity to these external things to which it related, would be all that was required; and so he that was externally a Jew, would have been truly one, in a compleat sense.

3. Either Japheth must dwell, under the covert of Abraham's covenant, as Shem's tents of grace, in the gospel day, or one of these two things plainly follow.

1st. Either Japheth must dwell, in the gospel day, under the Mosaic covenant, with all its ceremonies, that has vanished away, as we have seen, Heb. viii. 13. Or,

2ndly. Japheth has not one rag of Shem's tent to dwell under in the gospel time. In this light, I should think, a modest and honest mind would blush to make this plea, that Abraham's covenant was not a covenant of grace, with these consequences in sight.

6. If the seal of baptism is not allowed to the seed of believers, in the gospel day, then both Shem and Japheth have lost a privilege which Shem's posterity did enjoy in his tents. And such a privilege as Paul expresses thus, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Rom. iii. 1, 2. Here let it be noticed, that if circumcision had been a seal of some external, earthly covenant, or only a promise of the land of Canaan, as some suppose, then the Apostle would have said, chiefly, because the land of Canaan, or some external good, had been thereby given or secured to them: But his much every way is of another language. It imports a covenant relation to God, as his people, to whom he had committed his oracles to keep and hand down from age to age; and this was confirmed to them by the seal of circumcision, as God's covenant people. After this sort speaketh the same Apostle, "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory," and

“ and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises,” Rom. ix. 4. Hence there appears a good reason for the much every way of the Apostle. And can it be thought so great a privilege, which is much every way, should be lost to the church of God, both to the Jews and Gentiles; in that very day, when God was fulfilling that word under the Gospel, “ Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes,” Isaiah liv. 2. But if baptism is not come in the room of circumcision, as a seal to the church of God, both to the Jews and Gentiles, the cords are shortned and stakes are weakned, and the church has suffered a great loss, even of that which is much every way, and this is not consistent with the evident design of the Gospel, to enlarge the privileges of God’s church and people. But if baptism takes place in the room of circumcision, and is a seal of the same covenant, and same righteousness of faith, to believers, and their seed, under the Gospel, that circumcision was to Abraham and his seed, in Shem’s tents; then it clearly follows, that the church now, of Japheth’s posterity, may be brought compleatly to dwell in Shem’s tents, without the loss of the much every way, or any spiritual privilege, to themselves, or seed; and be still, by covenant relation, in possession of the oracles of God, and under covenant obligations, to hand them down to their seed, as the church of old, and so be what the Apostle saith of the church. “ The pillar and ground of the truth.” 1 Tim. iii. 15. And having this covenant relation to God sealed by baptism to their children, parents feel the force of that injunction to bring them up for God, to whom they have devoted them, as speaketh the Apostle to christian parents, “ Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” Eph. vi. 4. This supposes that the children of believers, were in such a covenant relation to God, as to be brought up for him. Here in this light, we find, how Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem, in the present day, without loss of privilege, or forcing the predication in our text, beyond its most evident design.

## IV. Notice

IV. Notice how God has actually accomplished the prediction in the text; and how it concerns every one to find himself dwelling in these tents.

I. Notice how God has actually accomplished the prediction in the text.

1. This is done by the success and spread of the Gospel, from the apostolic age down to this day, through those countries where it is most evident that the seed of Japheth dwell, agreeable to that expression, concerning the posterity of Japheth, "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands." Gen. x. 5. And the waters of the sanctuary, under the Gospel, have had special flow, from the eastern parts through Europe, and from thence to America, among the christian inhabitants; the body of these people, in both countries, being justly esteemed the posterity of Japheth, and by whom the Gospel is in an eminent manner enjoyed at this day.

2. God has accomplished the prediction in the text, by bringing the christian church, among Japheth's posterity, (so far as can be known) for the first eleven or twelve hundred years, generally, if not universally, into the practice of receiving their children into the visible administration of the covenant with their parents, and sealing it in baptism, as they had the seal of circumcision in the tents of Shem. Thus if we consider, that in the period above-mentioned, there is not found any body, of sober professing Christians, that excluded their seed from the seal of the covenant in baptism; and still all, but a very small part of professing Christians, even at this day, continue to apply the seal of baptism to their infant seed, as a seal of the righteousness of faith. In this view of the state of the christian church among the posterity of Japheth, we find the most certain and exact accomplishment of the prediction, that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem. Hence let the Christians of Europe and America, call to mind, that these are the works of that God, who "callesth those things which be not as tho' they were." Or with the Psalmist say, "this is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous

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"in our eyes." Or with Joshua, on an appeal to Israel, concerning the most full accomplishment of the good things promised to them in Canaan, say, "Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed, of all the good things the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." Now, O ye posterity of Japheth, behold, ye are at this day in the tents of Shem! as the Lord hath spoken by his servant Noah, so hath he done. And why should it be thought incredible, that Noah, who saw both worlds, the old and new, should by inspiration see both testaments, the old and new, or both administrations, the old and new?

But before I close this head of God's accomplishing the prediction in our text, I would observe these several things.

1. The incredibility of the pretence, that infant baptism is an innovation, or corruption, early crept into the church; when no author, or authors, can be named, that brought it in, or time fixed when it first took place; altho' ancient heresies, with their authors, and time of springing up, are handed down in history. Yea, that so great a change should be made in the very face of the church, in all parts of the world, without any special notice or difficulty; this appears altogether incredible. Therefore, to ground a denial of infant baptism on such a supposition, is to build our opinion and practice on a mere uncertain and incredible presumption; unbecoming serious Christians.

2. The most natural and fair construction of our text leads us directly, in the gospel day, to the baptizing of our infants, as taking the place of circumcision, and being a seal of the same covenant, and same righteousness of faith; without which Japheth has not the least appearance of, or possibility fairly to find any tents of Shem to dwell in, that Shem ever had or acknowledged for his dwellings; which yet remain in the gospel day.

3. By the denial of infant baptism, and practice accordingly, persons are insensibly opposing the exact fulfilment

fulfilment of our text, which, in divine providence, has been so clearly accomplished; when God brought Japheth into the tents of Shem, it was with his seed sealed in baptism, from the first to this day, in a general practice. Therefore, those who oppose infant baptism, are in danger of fighting against God (at unawares) by opposing the accomplishment of our text.

4. This denial of infant baptism leads persons to imagine, that Abraham's covenant, was either no covenant of grace, or that it is taken away or vacated under the Gospel. Now if Abraham's covenant, was not a covenant of grace, the Jews could not be either broken off from that covenant, by unbelief, or grafted into it by faith in some future time; for every one which knoweth that word, "the just shall live by faith," must know that covenant to be indeed a covenant of grace, and not of works, that is lost by unbelief, or gained by faith. And besides, how can the Jews be grafted in again to their own olive tree, if that covenant with Abraham is taken away, or was not a covenant of grace? For if Abraham's covenant was taken away, in the gospel day, as some suppose, then it could not be their own olive tree, from which they were broken off, by unbelief, for this was taken away in the gospel day, so that they had no such covenant relation to lose by unbelief, nor could there be any breaking off from that which was not in being, according to the supposition. Thus it appears in this light, that the Jews could not be broken off from their own stock, for they had none, nor in any sense broken off by unbelief, for the covenant stock was taken away, which could not be their fault. And again, if this covenant with Abraham was not a covenant of grace, the Jews could not be grafted into it by faith in gospel times, unless we can think they shall then be grafted into a covenant of works by faith; which I hope none will imagine to save a darling notion.

Hence it plainly follows (upon the principles of those who deny infant baptism, on the supposition that the covenant with Abraham is either taken away, or was not a

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covenant of grace) that there is no stock or olive tree, from which the Jews were broken off by unbelief; into which they may be grafted by faith, as their own olive-tree or root, which Paul supposeth, Rom. xith chap. Therefore we justly conclude, that such principles and practices as lead persons to deny the covenant with Abraham to be a covenant of grace, or to pretend that this covenant is vacated under the Gospel, do in this way of believing and practising, not only oppose the plain accomplishment of the prediction of Noah in our text, that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem (when, on these principles, Shem has no tents under the Gospel) but also oppose Paul manifestly, about the breaking off and grafting in of the Jews, and so are (at unawares) opposing the coming in of the Jews to the christian church, as to their own stock and olive-tree. Yea, if such principles should universally prevail among profest Christians, it would raise an unanswerable objection, in the minds of the Jews, about their being grafted into their own stock, in the christian church, as impossible; for which all pious men are wont to pray, and I doubt not, some who have unhappily mistook on these points, do earnestly pray for the coming in of the Jews; but I hope they will not be offended, if I should say, they need to watch, as well as pray, lest, on the coming in of the Jews to their own stock and olive-tree (when the vail shall be taken from their hearts, so as clearly to see the extent of that covenant with Abraham, which no doubt will be accomplished in its time) that then those who have too much resembled the Jews, in their unbelief about Abraham's covenant, should also resemble them in not owning the Jews at their coming into the christian church, by a grafting on their own stock, as the unbelieving Jews would not receive the Gentiles into the same covenant relation with themselves, and so were "enemies for your sake," as saith the Apostle, Rom. xi. 28. By such principles, and practices accordingly, persons may be in no small danger of opposing God's design, not only in bringing Japheth into Shem's tents; but also, in the same way, oppose God's design of grafting in the Jews, on their

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own stock; and this by laying an invincible stumbling block in their way, and also disowning them, as members of the christian church, on such a grafting into their own olive tree, as Paul mentions: From which may God preserve all persons, by a serious regard of that, "be not high minded, but fear," and by giving that anointing which teacheth all things! In this view of things, it appears strange that an honest, sensible man, who believes in Christ, and receives the seal of the righteousness of faith, in baptism, as a son of Abraham, for himself, yet should refuse the same seal to his seed, when he reads with care the assurance which we have that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and sees how God's providence has confirmed it in the accomplishment: When he remembers also, that the Apostle says the promise is to you, and your children, and calls to mind, that the seal, which was given to confirm the promise, was extended as far as the promise, even to Abraham and his seed, and so must fairly be understood, and to all that are afar off, and their seed; for otherwise the Jews would have a larger share in the promise, as proposed by Peter, than the Gentiles, which is plain: And still views how the Jews were broken off from Abraham's covenant or relation to God by unbelief, and shall be grafted into the christian church, as their own stock and root, which have borne the Gentiles, and not the Gentiles the Jews, as Paul hath it. Here I should judge, that there is full evidence enough to satisfy any son or daughter of Abraham, of Japheth's posterity, that their seed should dwell with them in these tents of Shem, where they are themselves, and enjoy the seal of these tents, as Shem's seed actually did. Now we pass to the

II Branch of this head, which was to notice how it concerns every one to find himself dwelling in these tents of Shem.

1. It concerns every one, in point of interest, and privilege, to find himself in those tents, where he and his are in a covenant relation to God, as his God, and the God of his seed, which is infinitely more to be prized than every earthly blessing, see David, altho' a king, speaking on this privilege,

privilege, and he saith, " I had rather be a door keeper in " the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of " wickedness," Psalm lxxxiv. 10. Our greatest interest then most surely urges us to see that we are in these tents (and not in the tents of wickedness) where having given up ourselves, and our seed to God, in baptism, we find a religious obligation, binding us to live to God, and bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, whose we, and they are, as God saith of Abraham the father of all that believe, " I know him, that he " will command his children, and his household after him, " and they shall keep the way of the Lord," Gen. xviii. 19. This is a worthy example for all Christians to pattern after, in the tents of Shem.

2. It concerns every one, in point of obligation, and gratitude to God; seeing God has, of his own sovereign goodness, opened these tents for fallen men, to enter and dwell there. Therefore, each one who is bound to be wholly the Lord's, and devoted to his service, loving him with all the heart, living to him in the whole life, as the Lord's, and not his own; under a sense of this obligation, he is bound to enter and dwell in these tents, by walking in all God's commands and ordinances blameless. Again, gratitude calls loudly on every one of the fallen race of men, to enter and dwell in these tents, as spread and opened by the unsearchable riches of divine love in Christ Jesus, who is the great shepherd over the flocks which dwell in these tents. These tents were not spread for fallen angels, but fallen men; therefore, gratitude urges each one of the fallen race of men, to enter and dwell here, in obedience and to the honour of the great owner, and not by neglect to slight the favour, of being in covenant with God, as unworthy of notice.

3. It concerns all those who do not allow their children the seal of the covenant in the gospel tents, at this day, when Japheth dwells in the tents of Shem,

1. Seriously to compare their tents, without their children, with Shem's, where children dwell, and see how

they look. And do they not look naked? like "the tents of Cushan in affliction," rather than the tents of Shem, in their additional glory under the gospel dispensation?

2. It behoves all such, with unprejudiced minds, open to receive light, fairly to view these tents, which are not erected on Abraham's covenant; nor yet the seed of believers sealed with the seal of the same righteousness of faith, as in the tents of Shem; and then judge, whether they can fairly, (without violence to the Scriptures) be called the tents of Shem; where neither the covenant, nor the subjects, nor the seal, is the same; nor did Shem ever own or dwell in such tents as these. Here, I should be ready to think, the unbiassed mind, open to light, rather than to see the tents of Shem vanish away, where he is to dwell (if a Christian of the posterity of Japheth) at this day, would be rather inclined to yield that these tents are open for the seed of believers, to enjoy the seal, as in the days of old, as a title to them. Whilst the serious soul considers these things, it is fit all carnal reasonings should give place to the plain voice of a divine prediction in our text, rather than force the Scriptures into some unnatural or improper sense, to support his own opinion; with this advice I leave the serious reader to ponder what is before him, and go on.

V. We were to answer some objections that may arise in some minds against what is said; and then close with some reflections, by way of improvement.

1. It may be objected, that there is no command in the word of God for the baptizing infants, nor yet any example of it; nor are they capable of a seal of the covenant of grace.

To this threefold objection, I would give this answer: To the first part I would answer thus; Noah (who by inspiration saw Shem's tents, before they were erected into a covenant form, with the seal of circumcision enjoined as a title to them) positively declares, as in our text, Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem. In the next place, let it be observed, that Abraham, who is called the father of

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all that believe, and heir of the world, who first took possession of these tents, in behalf of all that believe, both Jews and Gentiles; this Abraham of Shem's line, was commanded by God expressly, to circumcise, not only himself, but his infant seed, which the Apostle Paul calls a seal of the righteousness of faith; in this public character, as father of all that believe and heir of the world, he received the seal of the righteousness of faith, which he applied to his infant seed, Rom. iv. 11, 13. Hence it most evidently follows, that we (who have a right to these tents of Shem, in the gospel day, as believers, and children of Abraham and heirs according to the promise, and are blessed with faithful Abraham) must either renounce our claim to these tents, and to being the children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise, and also all part in the blessing with faithful Abraham; or else we must look upon ourselves bound by this command of God to Abraham, in which he acted as heir of the world, and so of course as our heir, in this character he received the command, and applied the seal to himself and seed: Therefore it appears plain, that we are commanded, in this command to Abraham, to apply the seal of the righteousness of faith to ourselves and seed, as Abraham was; it being given first to him, as our father, heir, or pattern, who took possession of this covenant, or these tents, in behalf not only of his own natural seed, but of all believers to the end of the world. Thus we have a plain command, for applying the seal of the righteousness of faith, to the infant seed of believers, as children of Abraham.

To the second part of the objection, that there is no example of baptizing infants in the Word. To this I would reply, that Abraham the father of all that believe, and heir of the world, has set us the most public example, in applying the seal of the righteousness of faith to his infant seed, at God's command; which seal now is baptism. This example, in the father of all that believe, and heir of the world, is more than ten thousand private examples, for this binds and teaches all the heirs; this example looks every believer in the face, who calls himself a child of Abraham.

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To the third part, I would say, God himself, by commanding Abraham to apply the token of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith to his infant seed, has thereby in the most full manner determined, that they are capable of receiving a seal of the covenant of grace, unless we would teach God knowledge. Let none think of evading the force of this argument, by saying the covenant of Abraham was not a covenant of grace, which has been so abundantly proved, and cannot be denied, without the most glaring absurdities. But still the objection may be further removed by several Scriptures, see the Prophet saying, "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," Isai. xlv. 3. Again, "for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them," Isai. lxxv. 23. Again, "their children also shall be as aforetime," Jer. xxx. 20. Compare these promises, which clearly allude to, the gospel day, with what we have from the Apostle Peter, who when he had exhorted the Jews to repent and be baptized, adds, for their encouragement, "for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 39. Now, let these words be viewed, and they bear this construction. First, that the promise is the immediate privilege of believing parents, and their children, as 'tis expressed in the present time, and it may not be so divided as to be the immediate privilege of the believing parents, and the future privilege of their children, when they shall believe; this change of the time, when the promise shall take place, between the parents and their children, is an evident abuse of the text, and agrees not to any promise that can be referred to. Secondly, the promise, which is unto the Jews and their children, must be extended to all that are afar off, and to their children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call, and their children; or else the Jews would have a larger share in the promise under the Gospel, than the Gentiles, which is not to be supposed. A like form of speech we have in the Evangelist, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man  
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"man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things," Matt. xii. 35. Here in the last clause the heart is left out; yet most fairly and necessarily understood: So is the children in each branch of the fore quoted text; Acts ii. 39. And still if we consider the promise of God to Abraham, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee;" and the predictions of the Prophets before-named, of the blessing that extends to the offspring of God's people, and their children, being as aforetime; and then recall the exhortation of Peter, as above, to repent and be baptized, enforced with "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off," to be understood of their children also, as we have shewn: In this view of Peter's exhortation, it gives believers, both of the Jews and Gentiles, a clear direction how far the seals should extend in baptism, even as far as the promise and blessing extended; for the plain design of a seal, is to confirm the promises, blessings or privileges of a covenant, and therefore are to be extended as far as they extend. In this light the Apostle is fairly to be understood, as exhorting to the baptism of children as well as parents, to whom now in the present time, the promise is extended. In this view the Apostle appears consistent and rational in every part. Here we may easily find a sufficient reason why infant baptism is no more expressly mentioned in the new testament; namely this, at the first and leading instance of all the apostolic administrations (while they were together, and not scattered as afterwards) it is determined, that the promise is unto parents, and to their children, as we have seen above; and this not only to Jews, but to all, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, and to their children; as by a fair construction of the words we have seen. Hence as the promise was to Abraham, and his seed, so was the seal; therefore this being fixed, by the Apostles, at this first notable instance of administration, there was no special need of ever mentioning the baptizing of infants, which was so fully contained and implied in the promise, and fixed by the first notable instance of administration, according to the extent

extent of the promise, to believing parents and their children; according to this, we find it recorded of several whole households, that they were baptized, without mentioning any thing farther about there being infants or not in them, which was not necessary on the forementioned rule of administration; for it must be taken for granted, that if there were any infants, they were baptized. In this manner, we may fairly understand that hint, "else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," 1 Cor. vii. 14. as an allusion to the established rule of admitting them to baptism, even where there was but one parent a believer, and we may see this holiness pointed at by that, "every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord." Luke ii. 23. In these places, holiness is not to be understood either of real sanctification of the heart, or of lawful marriage; but of such a covenant holiness as belonged to creatures devoted to God. And so is a hint of their practice of baptizing their children, and is not fairly accounted for, any otherwise, than in this sort, by all the attempts that have been employed about it. Thus we may easily see how it comes to pass, that we have no express account about the baptizing of the infant seed of believers. But turning the tables, and supposing the children of believers are not to be baptized under the Gospel, but are excluded from this seal of the righteousness of faith, and the much every way of the Jews, which they did enjoy in the tents of Shem, and are now treated as unclean, and not holy to the Lord, as once they were, and so have lost all covenant relation to God, or visible dwelling in the tents of Shem. Now, on the supposition presented to view, of so great and visible a change made in the subjects, who were to dwell in these tents of Shem, is it not much more incredible, that such a change as we noticed above should take place in the church of God, without one express word, in the new testament, to exclude infants from their former privileges, which they really had, than it is, on the other hand, for the Scriptures to be silent, in favour of the former heirs, who had, and still have a right to the promise and blessing, and are called  
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holy, and were in these tents, by long and divine warrant? Here they must argue strangely, who do not own that the silence of the Scriptures, in not expressly mentioning that infants were baptized, is not to be interpreted against those who had the seal of the righteousness of faith, in Shem's tents (where we are assured the Gentiles are now to dwell) unless some express word forbids them to enjoy the gospel seal of the same righteousness, which none pretend.

On this view of the matter in dispute, I would ask, whether there can be the like, or equal reason, for an express mention or declaration of the continuance of children in these tents, where they were by divine command, as, on the other hand, there must be, for turning them out, after they had been, by divine command, received into these tents? Now, I would appeal to the reason and conscience of all honest and sensible inquirers, whether the supposed silence of the Scriptures, in this matter of infant baptism, does not rather argue strongly for it, rather than in the least against it? Were infants admitted into Shem's tents, at God's word, and shall they be turned out without one express word in the matter? Who can believe this, without straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel? Thus I think the forementioned objection is fairly removed.

2. It may be objected, that the usual language of the new-testament is repent, or believe, and be baptized: Therefore infants that do not profess repentance, or faith, are not to be baptized. To this I reply,

1. The Gospel is properly, in its publication, to be addressed to persons in adult age, or such an age as they are capable of hearing with understanding; and in this, those who practice infant baptism differ not from those who deny it, in addressing themselves to such as are adults, to bring them to repentance, or faith; which evidently appears to be the case of the Apostles, in preaching to Jews, or Heathen, who attended their ministry, and this determines nothing in the case objected to; for all that practice infant baptism do the same.

2. It is repentance and faith, in adult persons, to whom the Gospel is addressed, that gives a title to the promise,

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for themselves, or a claim, as children of Abraham, or heirs of the blessing with Abraham; therefore in this, it is necessary it should be so addressed to them, as adults, to lay the foundation of their gospel right and claim, which determines nothing about any further privileges enjoyed by them, or their children, as believers, and so is nothing to the present case in dispute.

3. It is the visible and credible profession of repentance and faith, that gives a visible and credible claim to the promises and privileges of believers; therefore the Gospel is addressed to them, in a state of Judaism or Heathenism, as adults, to bring them to this repentance, faith and credible profession of the same, that they may receive all the privileges of visible believers, for themselves or children. Thus we fairly account why the usual language of the new testament, is, repent and believe, and be baptized; and do not discover the least opposition to the practice of infant baptism, which takes place or follows upon our visible and credible profession of repentance and faith. And here let it be observed, that to receive the seal of the righteousness of faith in baptism, for ourselves or seed, has the same ground to stand upon, even the promises, as Peter urged to repentance, with that encouragement, the promise is unto you, and to your children; therefore this may as properly, be called believers baptism, as any in the Bible; it being grounded on the promise, proposed to the parents, and may as well be done in the exercise of faith, for their children as for themselves, and for the answer of a good conscience in both, and not the putting away of the filth of the flesh in either. And now what reason can be justly assigned, why the promise to the children of believers, in the tents of Shem, should not be confirmed with the seal of the righteousness of faith, as was the promise, made to the seed of Abraham, in the same tents, I know not.

Here let the question be put, What is believers baptism? Answer, It is actually to believe the promise and receive the seal of the same, in baptism. Now let it be remembered, that Peter urges to baptism, in this language, "For  
"the

"the promise is unto you, and to your children." Here the promise is proposed to adults, in the character of parents, directly in the present tense, which extends both to parents and their children. Now, how shall these parents actually believe the promise, without actually believing it to extend to their children; for so it runs now in the present time? And how can they actually receive the seal of their faith in this promise, by baptism, without receiving it for their children, to whom the promise and their belief of the promise, did actually extend? Again, how is it possible, that any should be excited to baptism, for themselves, by believing this part of what Peter saith, the promise is unto you, and not have the same excitement to baptism for their children, by believing the other part, and to your children, when they are thus joined together by the Apostle to excite to baptism? To these things I think there is no solid answer can be given, without owning that the infants of believers have as good right to baptism, on the exhortation of Peter, as their parents, and that it may be properly called believers baptism, for themselves and children. For if we should suppose what we will about the matter of the promise, yet if it is an encouragement to baptism for the parents, it must be equal encouragement for the baptism of their children, to whom it extends.

3. It may be objected, that baptism is not a seal of the same covenant with that of circumcision, and so is not in its room; therefore ought not to be administered to the seed of believers. To this I reply,

1st. It has been most evidently proved, that the covenant made with Abraham is a covenant of grace, and contained all the grace that is enjoyed or manifested in the Gospel, and that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, in this covenant, cannot be denied. Therefore it follows, that baptism must be a seal of the same covenant, or of none.

2dly, The evident agreement there is in the use and signification, between baptism and circumcision, points out that baptism is instituted in the room of circumcision.

3dly, The Apostle sufficiently asserts this to be the case, by saying to the Colossians, " In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism." Col. ii. 11, 12. Here the Apostle has fixed what he meant by the circumcision of Christ, a being buried with him in baptism; therefore it is plain, that baptism does take the place and room of circumcision, as a seal of the same covenant of grace and righteousness of faith, with that of circumcision, and so may be properly applied to the infant seed, as that was for the same end or design. Hence the objection is removed.

4. It may be objected, that it is not possible, that baptism should succeed circumcision, as a seal of the same covenant, seeing the females were not circumcised, and now they are baptized.

To this let it be answered, the females were circumcised virtually, and in God's account treated as circumcised persons, when all the males were circumcised, altho' they were not capable of it in the flesh; see on this point what Moses saith, " When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land; for no uncircumcised person shall eat of the passover." Exod. xii. 48. Now it is plain, that altho' no uncircumcised persons were allowed to eat of the passover, yet it is also plain that the women had as good a right to eat as the men, which may be seen by ver. 4 and 47, of the above Exod. xii. Hence all the force of this objection disappears, for the females were looked upon, and treated as circumcised persons, where all the males were so.

5. It may be objected by some, if baptism takes the place of circumcision, then infants should be also admitted to the holy supper, as they were to the passover, which those who allow infant baptism, do not practice. To this I reply,

1st. The covenant made with Abraham, and sealed by circumcision, to himself, and seed, as his God, and the God

of

of his seed, had no immediate or direct relation to the passover, but stood without it four hundred and thirty years, as is most evident.

2dly. The occasion of the institution of the passover being for the deliverance of the first born of Israel in Egypt, and the remembrance of that deliverance, in which the children had a special share; therefore might properly be partakers of the passover, as special sharers in the salvation.

3dly. It is evident that the reason why circumcision was always to precede the attendance on the passover (altho' it was not the only qualification required) was this, that by circumcision, they were in a covenant relation to God, as his people; therefore without such a relation, it would not be proper to commemorate the deliverance of that people, with whom they were not in union by covenant; and hence it is plain, that circumcision was enjoined on the stranger, that would keep the passover, that so, as one with them, he might remember, and rejoice in their deliverance as his own. Hence,

4thly. It follows, that the vanishing away of the Mosaic administration of the passover (as a temporary constitution, which had its use and end, whilst that dispensation of types and shadows continued) does not in the least affect the privileges of Abraham's everlasting covenant, which was sealed to him, and his seed; according to the Apostle, "The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Gal. iii. 17. From this we plainly see that as the coming in of the legal dispensation of Moses, did not disannul the covenant promise with Abraham; so neither its vanishing away, under the Gospel, doth disannul the promise long before confirmed to Abraham in Christ. Therefore, in this view, we fairly conclude, that as the covenant relation of Abraham, and his seed, did long exist before the passover, and did not rest upon that occasional institution of the passover, it is not lost, or diminished, by any change of the subjects, or mode of the administration of the legal, or gospel passover, so that the objection, on that head,

head, against infant baptism, appears without foundation: For if it had been the will of the great head of the church, not to have appointed any gospel passover, or holy supper, for his church, that would not have altered the privileges of the promises relating to baptism in Abraham's covenant, one way or the other. Thus the objection disappears for the present.

6. It may be objected, what profit is there in applying the outward seal of the covenant to our seed, since it does not convey inward grace, as is most certain? Let it be answered to this,

1st. No outward seal was ever in itself designed to convey inward grace, either to the believer or seed; but to confirm the promise, strengthen grace, and answer a good conscience: Therefore the objection is not properly against infant baptism, but all baptism, as useless; because it does not that which it never was designed to do, in any case whatever.

2dly, This was indeed the case with circumcision, it did not convey inward grace to all that received it. Ishmael scoffs, and Esau is prophane. "Does the unbelief of some make the faith of God without effect? God forbid." Rom. iii. 3, 4. Here I think to be satisfied with the Apostle's much every way, as the advantage of circumcision, is much safer than to rest on our carnal reasoning, which as much opposes the circumcision of infants as the baptism of infants: Therefore, I conclude there is no weight in the objection.

Having thus considered the most important objections, I shall proceed to close with some reflections,

1. From what we have heard, we gather, that to deny the covenant made with Abraham to be a covenant of grace, is in a manner to deny the whole Gospel, so evidently collected from it, and standing on it, and must in that regard sap the hope of God's ancient people, who on such a supposition must either have all perished, or gone to heaven without a covenant of grace; either of which is horrible to suppose.

2. We also gather, that to deny the christian church of the Gentiles to be grafted into the same stock and on the same

same root, on which the jewish church stood before their breaking off by unbelief, is much to resemble the unbelieving Jews in this important point; who were broken off from the church of God, as enemies, for the sake of the Gentiles, as we see, Rom. xi. 28. and the believing Gentiles grafted in their room, on the same stock and among the branches that remained.

3. We infer, that such principles, or doctrines, as naturally lead persons to think Abraham's covenant was not a covenant of grace, or that the Gentiles are not grafted into that covenant, so as to partake of the root and fatness of it, as the jewish olive-tree, which is yet their root, into which they shall be again grafted, if they abide not still in unbelief; that these doctrines, which thus lead persons, are justly to be avoided, as sapping the foundation of the christian faith; and every step leading thereto ought to be guarded against by every serious soul.

4. We may infer, that if the covenant made with Abraham was not a covenant of grace, it could not be a place, or tent, for Japheth to dwell in, under the gospel dispensation, which is the thing intended in our text: Or, if this covenant is vacated, then it follows, most surely, Shem has no tents for Japheth to dwell in, at this day, of any kind or nature; nor for his own posterity to return to, for a grafting in again, as Paul concludes. Therefore every such imagination ought to be treated as vacated.

5. Hence let Japheth's posterity be advised carefully to shun such doctrines, and practices, as evidently oppose the fair and just accomplishment of the prediction in our text, by shutting out our children from these tents, without a warrant from God; lest we fall under that word, "Who hath required this at your hands?"

6. The manner of Japheth's coming in to dwell in these tents of Shem, in the gospel day, being by incorporation into the same body, and grafting on the same stock, and among the remaining branches of the jewish church, which were not broken off by unbelief: This fairly and necessarily implies the same privileges with that body and stock to which they are thus united; unless some exception is clearly

clearly mentioned. Hence God does plainly design that the privileges of the gospel church shall not be diminished, whilst the administration is more spiritual and glorious.

7. It appears most certain, that infants did once, by God's appointment, receive a sign or seal of the covenant of grace, in its visible administration, in the tents of Shem, which was the visible right of their continuance in them.

8. It is equally certain, that infants were capable of a visible seal, seeing it was God's appointment. He that says they are not, does charge God with folly; and let him answer it.

9. It most clearly follows, that as infants did once enjoy, and are thereby proved to be capable of enjoying a seal of the covenant of grace (in its visible administration in the tents of Shem) they have still the same right to enjoy a seal of the same covenant, in the same tents, where Japheth now dwells, under the Gospel, altho' the seal is changed; unless God has by some word cut them off from such a seal; but this is not done. Therefore they have a right still.

10. One of these things must follow on what is said. First, either the Jews had no advantage, nor was there any profit in circumcision: Or, Secondly, this advantage and profit is lost to believers under the Gospel; which may not be supposed: Or, Thirdly, Infants of believers must now have right to the gospel circumcision, which is baptism, in these tents of Shem.

11. From what we have heard we gather, that if the covenant made and confirmed to Abraham, and his seed, by the seal of circumcision, was not a covenant of grace, and an everlasting covenant, by which Abraham was constituted the father of all that believe, and heir of the world, so that these were not gracious and everlasting covenant privileges, which were granted to Abraham, and his seed, of the line of Shem, then these things necessarily follow.

1. There are no tents of grace under the Gospel for Japheth to dwell in, which Shem ever owned, acknowledged, or dwelt in as his tents.

2. It must be, on this supposition, impossible for our text to be accomplished under the Gospel, that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem, when Shem has no tents, either for himself or Japheth to dwell in at this day. 3. It

3. It follows, on the forementioned grounds, that altho<sup>g</sup> God has so exactly and evidently kept his covenant with Noah, and his seed, as a sure and everlasting covenant, confirmed by the bow in the cloud to this day; yet the covenant made with Abraham, and his seed, and confirmed with the seal of circumcision, as an everlasting covenant, has now for more than seventeen hundred years failed, and been vacated, which is impossible.

4. On the denial of Abraham's covenant as above, it clearly follows, that the Jews could not be broken off from their own olive tree, for it did not then exist; nor can they ever be grafted into it again, as their own root under the Gospel, for it has dried up and is dead, and has no sap or farness for them; on the above supposition, concerning Abraham's covenant privileges, these strange consequences, that are so shocking, are not to be avoided.

5. It also follows, that Christians have lost a privilege under the Gospel, which to Abraham's seed, under the old testament, was a privilege much every way for their advantage.

But to turn the tables, and allow, agreeable to what we have heard from the Scriptures, that the covenant made and sealed with Abraham, and his seed, was a covenant of grace, and an everlasting covenant, which constituted Abraham the father of all that believe, and heir of the world; and that these covenant privileges are the tents of Shem under the Gospel; then these things follow most evidently:

1. That Shem's tents are easily and fairly found, in these covenant privileges of Abraham and his seed, of the line of Shem.

2. Thus we see how our text is and may be most completely accomplished under the Gospel, by Japheth's coming into and enjoying these covenant privileges, as Shem's tents, by which the seal of the righteousness of faith, in baptism of parents and their infant seed, is enjoyed, as the seal of the same faith was enjoyed in the tents of Shem.

3. It appears in this view, that God has exactly accomplished the prediction in our text, and as truly verified his covenant with Abraham, as an everlasting covenant, as that with Noah by the bow in the cloud, which still continues, even to a demonstration.

4. It manifestly appears, that the Jews were broken off, by unbelief, from their own olive tree, yet standing, and, if not abiding still in unbelief, may be grafted in by faith, to their own olive tree, under the Gospel, as Paul mentions; and that as the believing Jews, with open arms and hearts (agreeable to the wish and prayer of the ancient church) received the believing Gentiles into the bosom of Abraham's covenant, in the beginning of the gospel day, so the believing Gentiles, of the christian church, shall with open arms and hearts (agreeable to their wish and prayers) receive the returning and believing Jews into the bosom of the same covenant of Abraham, as their own root and tents, and thus of twain become one body.

5. It hence clearly follows, that if the infants of believers as Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise to Abraham, are baptized, then the christian church is not deprived of that privilege, which Paul says is much every way.

In this last view, by turning the tables, the forenamed difficulties are fairly removed, without straining the Scriptures out of their proper design. Hence, to close all, we conclude, that if we would regard the faithfulness of God, in keeping covenant with Noah and Abraham, as an everlasting covenant; if we would not shut ourselves, and children, out of Shem's tents, and oppose the positive prediction in our text; if we would not lay a stumbling block in the way of the blind Jews, to hinder their return and grafting into their own stock; if we would treat our children as having a covenant holiness, agreeable to the Apostle; if we would not cut them off from all relation to God, as his, which is much every way their advantage; if we would not refuse to lay ourselves under obligation to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as his: Then, let all believing parents, on the above scripture grounds, give up their children to God in baptism, as an evident duty and privilege.

Now, may the same Spirit, that inspired holy Noah to foretell, that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem, take off the veil from our hearts, and lead us into a right understanding of the Scriptures.

## AN APPENDIX,

Taken from the Rev. *David Bostwick's*  
Fair and Rational Vindication.

**I** NOW pass on to consider the Evidence which we have that the Baptism of Children was the constant Practice of the primitive Church from the Apostles Time; which will still confirm the Evidence that it was their Practice also; For it cannot be supposed but that those who lived so near the Apostles, as the first, second, and third Centuries, must have known what was the Practice of the Apostles themselves, and that they practised accordingly: For 'tis allowed by all, that the Church was then in its Purity, and not corrupted with Innovations and Superstitions: And the Writers of those Times are not only Witnesses, that Infant-Baptism was the Practice in their Day, but expressly declare, some of them, that it was the Practice of the Apostles themselves, and of the Church from their Time.

The 1st Evidence I would produce is *Irenus*, who, by the best Accounts, was born before the Death of the Apostle John, and was well acquainted with *Polycarp*, who was *John's* Disciple; and therefore could not be mistaken about the Practice of the Church down to his Time. It is true, he mentions Infant-Baptism only transiently; for it had not then been a Matter of Dispute, and therefore there was no Occasion given for arguing about it.

It must also be observed, that he, and many of the Fathers, when they spoke of Baptism, used the Thing signified for the Sign; and, as in the Old-Testament, Circumcision is called the Covenant, instead of the Sign and Seal of the Covenant; so, by *Irenus* and others, Baptism is called Regeneration, because it is the outward Sign of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. With how much Propriety he calls it so, is nothing to me, if it appears that he does call it so, and under that Character speaks of it as commanded to Children and Little-ones, his Testimony is directly to the Purpose. And that he does use the Word Regeneration for Baptism, is plain from his own

Words: "When Christ, says he, gave his Disciples the Command of regenerating unto God, he said, Go and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here it is plain, that by the Command of regenerating, he means the Command of baptizing; not that he supposes Baptism was Regeneration; but he puts the Thing signified for the Sign, just as God himself does, when he calls Circumcision his Covenant, which was a Sign or Token of his Covenant.

Allowing then, that he uses Regeneration for Baptism, as the above Quotation plainly proves, his Testimony is plain for the Baptism of Infants; for he adds: Christ came to save those, "who by him are regenerated unto God; (i. e. baptized) both Infants and Little-ones; and young men and elderly Persons." Here he speaks of Infants and Little-ones being regenerated unto God. And that he uses the Word Regeneration for Baptism, putting the Thing signified for the Sign, is further evident from the concurring Practice of his contemporary Writers; particularly *Justin Martyr* who has these Words: "They are regenerated in the same Way in which we have been regenerated, for they are washed with Water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." If it be said there was an Impropriety in calling Regeneration Baptism, it is nothing to the present argument; for that they did call it so, is undeniably fact from these Quotations; and it is equally fact that they spoke of it as commanded to Infants and Little-ones, as well as young men and elderly persons.

In the Beginning of the third Century, *Origen* expressly declares Infant-Baptism to have been the constant Use of the Church. The Occasion of his mentioning it was this, he was attempting, in the eighth Homily, to prove the Doctrine of Original Sin, and that Infants were guilty as soon as born, and makes use of their Baptism as an Argument. "The Baptism of Children, says he, is given for the Forgiveness of Sins: But why, continues he, are Infants, by the Usage of the Church, baptized, if they have nothing that wants Forgiveness?" And again, he adds, "it is because by the Sacrament of Baptism the Pollution of our Birth is taken away, that Infants are baptized." With much more to the same Purpose.

Here is as plain a Testimony as can be given, that Infant-Baptism was the standing Usage of the Church; and that it was then a Point out of all Dispute; or else he never would have thought it an Argument to prove Original Sin. Nay, he not only asserts it to be the Usage of the Church in his Time,

Time, but declares that they received it from the Apostles; for in his Comment on the Epistle to the Romans, he has these Words: "The Church had also, from the Apostles, an Order "to give Baptism to Infants; for they, to whom the divine "Mysteries were committed, knew that there was, in all Persons, a natural Pollution, which ought to be washed away "by Water and the Spirit."

Now, *Origen* was born about the Year of our Lord 183, within 100 Years of the Apostles themselves. Both his Father and Grandfather were Christians. He was one of the most learned Men of that Age, and preached the Gospel in *Rome*, in *Greece*, in *Palestine*, and in *Syria*, and therefore could not but be acquainted with the Usage of all the Churches. And the Manner in which he speaks of it makes his Evidence the strongest, as he uses it for an Argument to prove another Doctrine, (viz.) Original Sin, which he could not have done with any Propriety, if it had not been an universally acknowledged Truth in his Day.

*Tertullian* also, who was contemporary with *Origen*, gives us a plain Proof that Infant-Baptism was the constant Practice of the Church in his Day.

It is true, he speaks against it, and advises that it should be delayed till grown to Years, say till after Marriage. The Reason was, he had entertained a Notion, that Sins, committed after Baptism, were next to, if not utterly unpardonable; and therefore advised that the Baptism of Children should be delayed, unless in case of Necessity, even till after Marriage, imagining they would then be less liable to Temptation, &c. Many other odd and singular Opinions are found in his Writings, and therefore it may be remembered, that I neither quote him, or any other of the Fathers, with a view to be determined, by their Opinions, whether Infants ought to be baptized, or not, but only to prove what was Matter of Fact, that the Baptism of Children was the Practice of the Church, whether right or wrong; and *Tertullian*, speaking against it (for the Reasons above-mentioned) is as plain a Proof of the Fact as any of the rest. For, if it was not the Custom to baptize Children, why should he speak against it? Surely he would not fight with his own Shadow, or oppose a Practice or Custom that had no Existence. And besides, he allows it in Cases of Necessity, i. e. when in Danger of Death; so that he was only against it for the absurd Reason he mentions, lest they should fall into more aggravated Sin. And therefore he would not have it administered in common Cases till after Marriage.

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The next Evidence, I would produce, is the blessed Martyr *Cyprian*, who was made Overseer of the Churches at *Carthage*, about 248 Years after the Birth of Christ. A Question was started in his Time, whether Infants might be baptized, before they were eight Days old? because that was the Day in which Circumcision was to be administered. On this he calls a Council of Ministers, no less than 66 in Number, who all unanimously agreed, that Baptism ought not to be delayed till the eighth Day; at least, that there was no Necessity of such a Delay. A large Letter was wrote to this Purpose to satisfy all who were in doubt about this Question, and signed by *Cyprian* in the Name of the rest.

Now observe, the Question was not whether Infants were to be baptized, this was allowed by all, but the only Question was, whether, like Circumcision, it must be limited to the eighth Day from the Birth? And this they determined in the Negative, and say, it may with equal Propriety be administered sooner.

*St. Ambrose*, who wrote about 274 Years from the Apostles, declares expressly, that the Baptism of Infants has been the Practice of the Apostles themselves, and of the Church till that Time. And this he mentions only transiently, when speaking on another Subject, which plainly proves it was not a Subject of Debate. It would weary your Patience to cite all the Authors that might be produced to this Purpose. I shall therefore conclude with the Testimony of *St. Austin*, who wrote his Piece against the Donatists about 300 Years after the Apostles, in which he has these very Words: "If any ask for divine Authority in the Matter of Infants being baptized, though that which the whole Church practises, and which has not been instituted by Council, but was ever in Use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a Thing delivered by the Authority of the Apostles, yet, says he, we may take a true Estimate how much Baptism avails Infants, by the Circumcision which God's former People received."

The same Thing he urges in his Controversy with *Pelagius*, which was about the Year 410. Now *Pelagius* had taught, that Infants were born free from any sinful Defilements. *St. Austin* writes against him, and insists on the Baptism of Infants, which was the known and standing Practice of the Church, as an Argument of their natural Defilement. In this Plea he has these Words: "That Infants are by all Christians acknowledged to stand in need of Baptism, which must be in them for Original Sin, since they have no other." Again, says he, "If they have no Sin, why are they accepted to the Usage of the Church?"

“Church-Baptism? Why are they washed with the Laver of  
“Regeneration, if they have no Defilement?”

*Pelagius* was extremely puzzled with this Argument, as he could not pretend to deny Infant-Baptism. Nay, when some charged him with denying it (as the necessary Consequence of this Doctrine) he tries to refute the Charge, and has these remarkable Words: “Men slander me, says he, as if I denied “Baptism to Infants.” This he calls a Slander, and says, that he never heard of any, no, not the worst of Heretics, that would say such a thing of Infants.

This Confession is the strongest Demonstration that Infant-Baptism was universally practised, Time out of Mind; or else he, whose Interest it was to deny it, to answer the Arguments of his Adversary, would certainly have done it. But so far is he from that, though his Cause required it, that he expressly declares he does not deny it, nor ever heard of any that did.

Now, *Pelagius* was a great Scholar, and a great Traveller. He had been to *Rome*, *Africa*, *Egypt*, and *Jerusalem*, where he spent much Time; and therefore must be acquainted with the Rites of the Fathers, and Customs of the Churches in all these Parts; and yet he declares that he had never heard of any that had denied Baptism to Infants. It is as plain then as History can make it, that there had been then no Dispute about the Point, and that there was not, neither had been, any Sect of People professing Christianity, that denied it, from the Apostles Time to that Day. Nor is there the least Evidence that it was ever opposed by any Man, or Society of Men, for six or seven hundred Years from that Time. And now, what is the Consequence? You see that the baptizing Infants was the Practice of the Churches, derived from the Apostles Time, and so on for eleven or twelve hundred Years, which is as plain a Fact as History and the Writings of those Times can make it. The Consequence is, that if Infant-Baptism is a Nullity, and not agreeable to the Institution of Christ, then the Church must have lost an Ordinance during all this Period. Nay, they must have lost it in the very first Ages, and purest Times, and there must have been no regular Baptism, consequently no Christian Ministers, or any Ordinances, for eleven hundred Years, or more. And can any Man, of an impartial Mind, believe this? What then would become of our Saviour's Promise, to be present in the Administration of Baptism? *Lo! I am with you always, even to the End of the World.* For that they baptized Infants you see is Fact; and if this was not agreeable to his Institution, he could not be with them in the Administration of that Ordinance,

hance, and therefore his Presence must fail, and his Church, during all that long Period, of many hundred Years, must have had no regular Baptism, and consequently could be no regular Gospel-Church. And who can persuade himself, or imagine, that Christ had no Church in the World during all that Period? Besides, if Infant-Baptism had, in any of those Periods, been introduced by Men, and had not been the Custom of the Church from the Apostles, how strange must it appear that there should be no account, no not the least Hint, in all Antiquity, when it was introduced, or by whom? Had it been human Invention, would it have been so universal in the first 300 Years, and yet no Record left when it was introduced, nor of any Dispute or Controversy about it? This is incredible.

We have particular Accounts in History, when the Baptism of Infants began to be denied and disputed, and by whom; but no Account of any Time or Means of its Introduction: Which is a plain Proof that it must have been handed down from the Apostles, and have been a standing Privilege in the Church from their Time.

Again, if Infant-Baptism is a Nullity, it is plain, from the historical Facts above-mentioned, there can *now* be no regular Baptism in the World, nor ever will be to the End of Time; since a Succession of Adult Baptisms cannot so much as be pretended to.

Those then, who first began to baptize Adults, were themselves baptized in their Infancy, and therefore, being unbaptized themselves, according to the *Anabaptists* Scheme, could never have Authority to baptize others. So that all the present Adult Baptisms, if traced back, must come originally from those who were baptized in Infancy; and consequently, on *their* Principles, can have no Validity in them.

We must therefore give into one of these three Things. Either 1st, That a Succession of Adult Baptists can be traced from the Apostles: Or, 2dly, That Infant-Baptism is valid, and agreeable to the Institution of Christ: Or else, 3dly, That there neither is nor can be any regular Baptism in the Church, to the End of the World.

The 1st can never be done, as all must allow. The last is too shocking and impious to be admitted. And therefore the 2d must be acknowledged, viz. That Infant-Baptism is valid and agreeable to the Institution of Jesus Christ; for a fourth Conclusion cannot be thought on.



